

I CLAIM:

1. A method of controlling fluid flow in a valve arrangement, the valve arrangement including a valve body having a pressure port, a work port, and a tank port, a  
5 solenoid device coupled to the valve body, and a spool operably coupled to the solenoid device, the method comprising:
  - (a) pressurizing the work port by energizing the solenoid device and moving the spool a first distance from a neutral position to a pressurized position;
  - (b) relieving the work port by de-energizing the solenoid device and moving  
10 the spool a second distance to a relieving position, the second distance being greater than the first distance, the valve arrangement being configured to provide a first gap for fluid communication between the work port and the tank port when the spool is in the relieving position, the first gap of the valve arrangement having a first cross-sectional area; and
  - 15 (c) moving the spool, without energizing the solenoid device, from the relieving position to the neutral position, the valve arrangement being configured to provide a second gap for fluid communication between the work port and the tank port when the spool is in the neutral position, the second gap of the valve arrangement having a second cross-sectional area,  
20 the first cross-sectional area of the first gap being greater than the second cross-sectional area of the second gap.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the first cross-sectional area of the first gap is up to 20 times greater than the second cross-sectional area of the second gap.  
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3. The method of claim 1, wherein the first cross-sectional area of the first gap is about 1.5 to 3.5 times greater than the second cross-sectional area of the second gap.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the second cross-sectional area of the second gap is sized and configured to accommodate leakage from the pressure port into the valve arrangement to prevent unwanted pressure buildup within the work port.
- 5 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the valve arrangement includes only one solenoid valve.